

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 2 are amended. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiner Kornakov during a telephonic interview on May 10 are gratefully appreciated. Applicants thank Examiner Kornakov for his time. The reasons presented during the conversation as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a)/§ 102(e) over Bush et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,461,442; hereinafter Bush). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Specifically, Bush fails to teach or suggest a process that includes at least providing a one-piece resilient sponge material having sponge cells, a base section for contacting an outside surface at a first end of a drum, and a guide section for contacting an inside surface at the first end of the drum, wherein the guide and base sections each contains one or more channels for flowing liquid solvent for a coating material of the drum away from the drum, and flowing the solvent away from the drum through the channels in the guide section and the base section, as recited in independent claim 1.

In contrast, Bush discloses a process for removing a strip of coating material from a first end of a drum by using a foam material to simultaneously wipe both the inside surface and the outside surface of the first end of the drum (Bush, abstract). Bush's foam material contains shallow drain grooves 76 that flows cleaning solvent away from the drum (Bush, col. 6, ll. 39-44). Although Bush mentions that the foam material may include multiple sections, and internal channeling is mentioned as a possibility (Bush, col. 11, ll. 35-40), Bush fails to disclose on which sections of the foam material to form the possible internal channels. Instead, Bush explicitly teaches that shallow drain grooves 76 are formed on the upper surface 70 of the foam material (Bush Figs. 4 and 5; col. 7, ll. 37-54). Moreover, although Bush

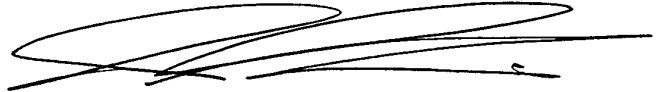
suggests that the foam material includes open cell pores as asserted in the Office Action,
Bush fails to disclose a process as recited in independent claim 1.

For at least these reasons, independent claim 1 and its dependent claims are patentable over Bush. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a)/§ 102(e) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-11 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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